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ABSTRACT

In recent years, haiku has become a widely adopted part of the language arts curriculum, particularly at the elementary level. Educators appreciate the simplicity and brevity of haiku as a poetic form that young students can grasp fairly easily and therefore express themselves readily. However, this focus on form has often been to the exclusion of a deeper understanding of the artistic themes and cultural values found in Japanese literature that are an equally central part of the rich tradition of haiku poetry. This secondary level unit seeks to remedy this disparity. For the Japanese, haiku has been a very personal, meaningful form of self-expression, at the same time one which is molded according to certain conventions inherited from the past. By helping students understand how haiku developed within Japanese culture, students may appreciate more fully this unique poetic form. The specific goal of the unit is to stimulate the creative energies of secondary level students by instilling awareness of natural environment through haiku poetry. Contains six lessons: (1) "Haiku Structure and Themes"; (2) "Japanese Aesthetic Principles"; (3) ""Haiku and Nature"; (4) "Creative Writing"; (5) "Translating Haiku"; and (6) "Optional Activities." Appendices contain additional haiku, background information for teachers, a pronunciation guide, and 19 references. (EH)

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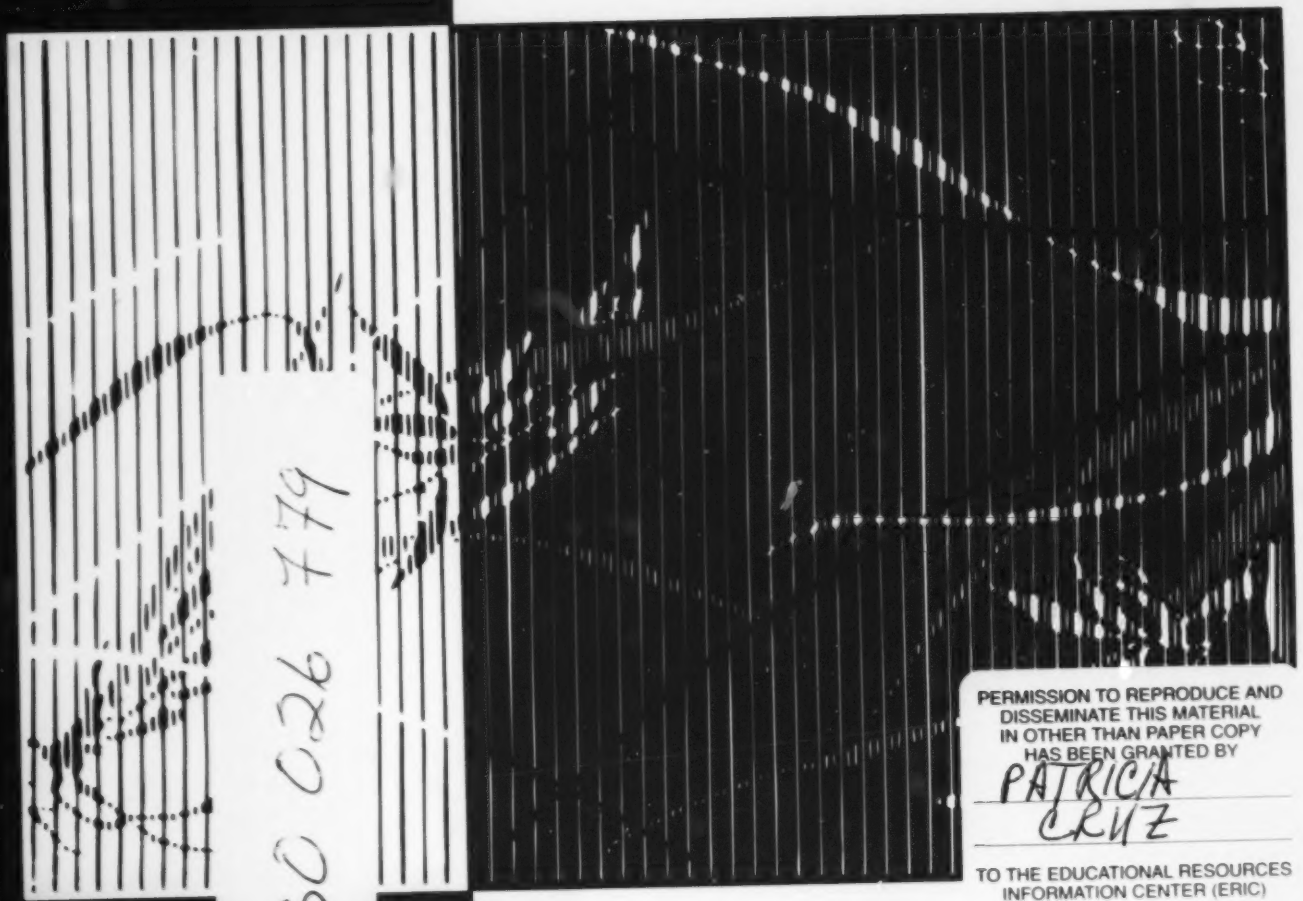
THE HAIKU MOMENT: SEEING THE WORLD IN A GRAIN OF SAND



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THE HAIKU MOMENT:

SEEING THE WORLD IN A GRAIN OF SAND

A Curriculum Unit for
Secondary Levels

Developed by

The Japan Project
Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

unit introduction

The Haiku Moment: Seeing the World in a Grain of Sand 7
Rationale 7
Unit Goals 7
Materials 8
Grade Levels 8
Time and Suggested Sequence of Activities 8
Subjects 8
Icons 9

lesson one

Haiku Structure and Themes 11
Transparency 1A: Sample Haiku Poetry 16
Transparency 1B: Alliteration, Onomatopeia, and Pun 17

lesson two

Japanese Aesthetic Principles 19

lesson three

Haiku and Nature 25

lesson four

Creative Writing 29

lesson five

Translating Haiku 31

lesson six

Optional Activities 33

Handout 6A: Haiku Poetry and Poets 35
Handout 6B: Review of Haiku Guidelines 38

appendices

Appendices 39
Appendix A: Additional Haiku 40
Appendix B: Background Information for Teachers 42
Appendix C: Pronunciation Guide 43
Appendix D: Bibliography 45

Unit Introduction

THE HAIKU MOMENT: SEEING THE WORLD IN A GRAIN OF SAND

Rationale

In recent years, haiku has become a widely adopted part of the language arts curriculum, particularly at the elementary level. Educators appreciate the simplicity and brevity of haiku as a poetic form that young students can grasp fairly easily and therefore express themselves readily. However, this focus on form has often been to the exclusion of a deeper understanding of the artistic themes and cultural values found in Japanese literature which are an equally central part of the rich tradition of haiku poetry. This secondary level unit seeks to remedy this disparity. For the Japanese, haiku has been a very personal, meaningful form of self-expression, at the same time one which is molded according to certain conventions inherited from the past. By helping students understand how haiku developed within Japanese culture, we hope that their own haiku-writing will be enriched and that they will come to appreciate more fully this unique poetic form.

Taking into account these general concerns, the specific goal of this unit is to stimulate the creative energies of secondary level students by instilling awareness of the natural environment through haiku poetry. In order to accomplish this, Japanese aesthetic principles (especially those of simplicity and suggestion) will be examined as they apply to haiku and other art forms.

Haiku are introduced as both a unique Japanese art form and a universal medium of expression. Students are challenged to confront first-hand the problems of translation into English. Once again, creativity and the use of personal experience are to be stressed.

This unit assumes that neither the teacher nor the students have extensive background in Japanese haiku.

Unit Goals

- to teach students that the tradition of haiku originated in traditional Japan and has continued to the present, spreading throughout the world
- to help students identify the structure of haiku as a poetic form
- to emphasize the relationship of ourselves to nature, the central subject matter of haiku
- to expose students to the general concept of aesthetics, helping them become familiar with important aspects of Japanese aesthetics
- to challenge students to apply this understanding in analyzing haiku

- to challenge students to write their own haiku

Note: specific objectives for the six lessons of the unit are listed at the beginning of each lesson

Materials

- slide/cassette tape set
- student handout

The cassette tape includes:

Side A:
- the five poems in Lesson Three (read in Japanese and English) with Japanese music in the background. The music continues for approximately ten minutes after the poems have been read to accompany additional slides in Lesson Three.

Side B:
- two poems illustrative of alliteration and onomatopoeia (Transparency 1B, read in Japanese and English)
- eight poems from Additional Haiku (Appendix A), read only in Japanese
- Japanese syllabary pronunciation, as listed on the Pronunciation Guide (Appendix C)

Grade Levels

This unit has been designed for secondary level students.

Time and Suggested Sequence of Activities

The classroom and homework activities which make up the unit will take approximately 2-3 class periods to complete. They consist of six lessons:

Day 1 (1) Introduction to Haiku Structure and Themes
(2) Japanese Aesthetic Principles (slide show)

Day 2 (3) Haiku and Nature (slide and tape presentation)
(4) Creative Writing
(5) Translating Haiku (begin)

Day 3 Translating Haiku (finish)
(6) (Optional Activities)

Subjects

- Creative writing
- Literature
- Japanese culture
- Language arts

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Icons

For easier reference the following icons are used throughout the unit:

Notes to the Teacher

Background Information

Transparency

Slide Presentation

Audio Cassette

Lesson One

HAIKU STRUCTURE AND THEMES

Introduction

In this lesson, students will read several examples of haiku and analyze the typical structure and themes of haiku.

Objectives

- to analyze the typical characteristics of haiku
- to read several examples of haiku
- to learn poetic terminology

Materials

- overhead projector
- Transparency 1A

Teacher Preparation

1. Read the teacher background materials (Appendix B) before starting the lesson, in order to either become acquainted with or to review the major aspects of haiku poetry.
2. If possible, use a poster, slides, or other pictures to illustrate one of the haiku used in this lesson. You may wish to check with the nearest Japanese Consulate, which often provides free posters tc schools. Or look for haiku poems which match posters or pictures of Japan that you already have. Be sure to use a translation which preserves the 5-7-5 syllable structure of the original poem.

Suggested Procedures

1. Set the context for this lesson by asking students if they have ever studied haiku before. What do students know about haiku? Make the following points in your discussion:
   - Haiku is a form of poetry which comes from Japan, but can be written and understood in many languages.
   - The form of haiku is quite simple as compared to other poetry forms.
   - Haiku has been popular in Japan for over three hundred years and has been influenced by Buddhism. (See bibliography for more information on the 17th century in Japan)
   - Both classical and modern haiku are still popular in Japan.

2. Show students Transparency 1A. Read the first poem. This first poem was written 300 years ago by the first great haiku poet, Basho.

3. With the class, read the remaining three haiku on Transparency 1A.

   - Shoson is the pen name of Kenneth Yasuda, a contemporary Japanese-American haiku writer and translator.

4. Ask students to analyze the four haiku. What characteristics do they share? What characteristics make them different?

5. Ask students to make a list of the general rules or guidelines that they think haiku poets follow, based on the poems on the transparency and their previous knowledge of haiku. The following questions may be used to elicit answers from students:

   - How many lines do the haiku have?
   - How many syllables per line?
   - Do the lines of the haiku rhyme?
   - What is the subject matter of the haiku?
   - What kinds of themes exist in the haiku? How many themes does each haiku have?
   - Can you imagine the type of place or scene that this haiku describes?

6. Record student responses on the chalkboard. Then organize student responses under the following six headings:

   - structure: three lines, 17 syllables, in 5-7-5- order (*exceptions occur in both Japanese and English)*
   - grammar/syntax: phrases and thoughts, not full sentences
   - rhyme scheme: no rhyme scheme (*again, exceptions occur in both Japanese and English)*
   - subject: usually nature or human experiences
   - theme: usually only one per poem
   - poetic diction/vocabulary: (1) concrete, natural images, (2) economy of words, lack of unnecessary repetition, (3) use of *kigo* (key-go), special words that evoke images of a particular season in the reader's mind.
   - other poetic devices: alliteration, onomatopeia, puns

Kigo probably needs further explanation for most students. Examples of *kigo* are: melting snow and flowers in Japan indicate spring; lightning, monsoon rains, and humid weather usually signify summer. In the United States, snow, evergreen trees, and the New Year may suggest winter; rustling leaves and pumpkins usually symbolize fall.

In the four poems on Transparency 1A, the *kigo* are:

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- frog (late spring)
- full autumn moon (fall)
- daffodils (spring)
- butterflies (butterflies signify spring in Japan; what do you think butterflies signified to the American poet of this poem?)

In Japan, how seasons affect people's lives has always been very important. Activities and artistic pursuits are chosen to correlate with a particular season, and Japanese literature often refers to the seasons and their special characteristics. Such references hint at a character's feelings or a situation's atmosphere. In each haiku, the *kigo* directs the reader or listener not simply to a season, but also to a rich associative tradition surrounding that time-period. Using *kigo* allows a poet to make large implications with few words.

Please note that *kigo* fall into five, not four, categories: spring, summer, fall, winter and New Year.

7. To illustrate alliteration, onomatopeia, and puns in Japanese haiku, read the poems on Transparency 1B with the students. Use the pronunciation guide (Appendix C) if necessary.

   - *Alliteration poem:* notice the repeating "k" sound; assonance also occurs in the last line, with the "a" sound.

   - *Onomatopeia poem: Hoku-hoku* is onomatopoetic for the sound of the horse's hooves marching along. In the English version here, it is translated as "clop-clop."

   - *Pun poem:* In Japanese, *matsu* means both "pine tree" and "to pine" or "to wait." *Kaze* means wind, so *Matsukaze* can mean "the wind in the pines" or "the pining wind." The adjective *samushi*, "cold," can describe either *matsukaze* or *Aki*, "autumn." The punning of the original is neatly translated into English by Harold Stewart. "Pines" can be understood to have both of the Japanese meanings. Also, depending on how one spells "side"—either "side" or "sighed"—a double meaning is in the second line, too.)

Related Activites

1. Encourage students to read other haiku. (See bibliography for haiku collections or use the selected poems in Appendix A.) Have students try to identify the general rules and characteristics of haiku in poems they have not previously studied, through class discussion, a homework assignment, or a short paper.

2. Students may wish to explore alliteration and onomatopeia further. Depending on your students' skill levels, you may wish to have them read poems in their native language before reading haiku in Japanese. Use the haiku anthologies listed in the bibliography or the selected poems at the end of the unit. Give students a copy of the pronunciation guide in the appendices if they wish to read Japanese haiku.

3. To further teach about *kigo*, ask each student to write down an object that very strongly reminds him/her of a particular season. Collect students' ideas. Read each aloud and have the class guess to which season the object refers, or call out one of the seasons and have students simply respond out loud. Of course, not all students will agree in their responses. Remind students that subjectivity plays a big role in these impressions. However, in Japan, *kigo* were traditionally fixed to one particular season. Therefore, subjectivity in *kigo* is less likely than for words in English, for example. And among all winter *kigo*, for example, some evoke the sense of early winter, others full winter and still others, end of winter.

   In exploring the use of *kigo* in haiku, you might ask your students the following questions:

   - In what ways do *kigo* help poets express their meaning and emotions?
   - How do *kigo* allow poets to be less explicit in such expression?
   - How might they help poets economize on words (and syllables) while maximizing the range of what poets can say?

1. You may need to discuss the specific meaning of terms such as *topic*, *thesis*, and *theme* to clarify your discussion of haiku.

   The *subject* is a larger area (for example, the season spring) from which one chooses a smaller part to write about which is called the *topic*. (an example of a topic would be cherry blossoms.)

   The *thesis* is a single phrase that affirms or denies one aspect of the topic. (An example of thesis is the blooming of the cherry blossoms.) The thesis can be implicit or explicit: in haiku it is usually implicit. (If blossoms are described as "scattered," then, it implies that the blossoms have fallen, which affects the theme of the poem.)

   The *theme* is that which characterizes the thesis. (For example, joy at the arrival of spring, indicated by a description of the first cherry blossoms of the year.) The theme is at the heart of the poem and characterizes the author's mood or attitude towards his/her subject.

   To more fully understand how these terms apply to haiku, analyze the following haiku:

The fields and mountains	No mo yama mo
Have all been taken by snow	Yuki ni torarete
and nothing remains.	Nani mo nashi.

—Joso (1661-1704)

- *Subject:* winter
- *Topic*: snow
- *Thesis*: the snow taking or covering everything

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- *Theme*: an awareness of quiet, beauty, solitude, loneliness as felt through the white, wintry scene where nothing is left to view but the fallen snow.

Depending on the level of your students, such distinctions, especially that between *subject* and *theme*, may be important to make.

transparency 1a

SAMPLE HAIKU POETRY

1 Old pond, blackly still— frog, plunging into water, splinters silent air —by Basho	2 *Autumn Noon* The full autumn moon Cast upon the straw mat floor Shadows of the pines (translated from Japanese) —by Kikaku (1660-1707)
3 *In Daffodil Field* Flowered is her hem Ankle-deep in daffodils As she gathers them (first written in English) —Shoson (20th century)	4 *Butterflies* Butterflies are like A many-colored rainbow Nectar is their gold —by a California second-grader

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ALLITERATION, ONOMATOPEIA, AND PUN[1]

Alliteration Ochi kochi ni Taki no oto kiku Wakaba kana	Far and near, The sound of falling water Heard through young leaves —by Basho (1644-1694)
Onomatopoeia Uma hoku-hoku Ware wo e ni miru Natsu-no kana	On my horse clop-clop I see myself in a picture crossing summer fields —by Basho
Pun Tasogare ya Matsukaze samushi Aki no yama	How mournfully the wind of autumn pines Upon the mountainside, as day declines! —by Nansei (20th century)

[1]None of the three examples have been translated with a 5-7-5 syllable structure. The poem illustrating pun is a 2-line translation by Harold Stewart. See his book listed in the bibliography for more of these kinds of translations. Also, see Lesson Five for more discussion of the problems that occur with translation.

Lesson Two

JAPANESE AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES

Introduction

By showing students slides of some of the traditional Japanese arts, such as a tea ceremony and flower arrangement, this lesson gives an extremely brief and simplified view of Japanese aesthetics, concentrating on the principles of simplicity and suggestion. This lesson presents exceptions and qualifications to the principles to balance the picture of Japan's artistic heritage. This lesson also discusses the concepts of spontaneity and rhythm as they apply to the appreciation of haiku.

Objectives

- to define the term "aesthetics" for students
- to identify simplicity and suggestion as two major Japanese aesthetic values in a variety of Japanese art forms
- to briefly introduce students to the principles of spontaneity and rhythm

Materials

- haiku slide set
- slide projector and screen

Suggested Procedures

1. Other than the haiku conventions discussed in the previous section, there are also certain rules of style to keep in mind when both reading and writing haiku. These relate to principles of Japanese aesthetics.

   Ask students to define the term *aesthetics*.

   - *Aesthetics* refers to the branch of philosophy that discusses artistic theories and principles analyzing forms of beauty and the fine arts. Student definitions should include the concepts of beauty, art, form, and style.

2. Then ask students for definitions and examples of the terms *simplicity* and *suggestion*.

3. Introduce the slides. Ask students to observe these principles of Japanese aesthetics as they apply to various art forms. The slides should allow students to see commonalities among the arts which also apply to haiku.

   (The answers provided with the questions below are suggestions of possible responses to each slide. Please use them only as a guide for directing discussion.)

lesson two

Slide Script

#1: *Tea Ceremony Room*

This is a room where tea ceremony is performed. (For students new to this art, you might define it as a ritualized method of preparing and serving tea to guests.)

Which of the aesthetic principles does it illustrate and how?

Answer: The materials from which the room is constructed, the lines of the room, the absence of furniture or ornamentation except for the hanging scroll and the very simple flower arrangement and the placement of the tea serving objects in one corner of the room all show simplicity.

#2: *Rock Garden*

This is the adjoining rock garden of the tea ceremony room. Together, these two spaces are called the "Flower of the Mind."

What does the title suggest to you?

Answer: The title suggests using imagination when one enters the garden and tea room. It also invites the guest to relax and harmonize with nature.

#3: *Rock Garden*

Here is another picture of a rock garden.

Which of the aesthetic principles are operating here? What do you think the rocks and sand signify?

Answer: Both principles are illustrated here. The total mood is one of contemplation and calm. The entire garden suggests a large seascape, with sand signifying the sea and rocks the islands.

#4: *Lotus Blossoms* (Ohara School of Flower Arrangement)

This is a flower arrangement of lotus blossoms. What principle of Japanese aesthetics mentioned today does this symbolize?

Answer: Both suggestion and simplicity are symbolized; although the use of few materials and simple lines obviously indicate the concept of simplicity, the arrangement also suggests the way lotus appear in the natural environment.

Close your eyes for a moment and picture how lotuses look growing outdoors in nature.

#5: *Lotuses in a Pond*

How do you think the flower arrangement compares with the natural setting which it idealizes?

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Answer: Flower arrangements try to recreate the essence of flowers in nature with the utmost economy and simplicity. Everything unessential or repetitive is eliminated.

Japanese poets have used both nature and artistic recreations of it for inspiration for haiku. They have sought to express the essence of nature which is also at the heart of flower arrangement, tea ceremony and other arts.

Which would you find more conducive to writing haiku, the flower arrangement or the natural setting of the lotus blossoms?

#6: *Traditional New Year's Foods*

These traditional Japanese New Year's foods, consisting of fish and pickled vegetables, are typical of fine Japanese cuisine. What looks like a teapot is really a *sake* or Japanese rice wine server, and the little bowls next to it are *sake* cups.

#7: *Close-up of Food on the Previous Slide*

This gives us a closer view of the food itself. The bottom horizontal object is a pair of chopsticks. (The Chinese character for long life is printed on the paper.)

What do you notice about the way the food is served?

Answer: It is served very simply. The dish is perfectly arranged. There is no extra food or decoration such as parsley or lettuce, perhaps because that would be thought to detract from the overall appearance.

#8: *Camellia on Side of Stone Water Basin*

How do you feel about this slide?

Answer: Many answers are possible. Hopefully, students will observe the quiet simplicity or tranquility of the setting. Some may feel that it looks natural while others may find it contrived. In either case, perhaps someone will comment on its suitability as inspiration for writing haiku. If not, you may want to ask them the following question.

Does it make a good topic for haiku?

#9: *Picture from the Shrine at Nikko*

In studying Japanese art, you will find exceptions and contradictions to the concepts shown in these slides. A prime example is the architectural style at the famous shrine at Nikko shown in this slide. Its elaborately decorated and brightly colored buildings were built in the 17th century, during the same time that haiku was developing. This shrine was built by the ruling family (the Shogun's family) to demonstrate its power and prestige.

Do you think that the style of architecture used at Nikko was suited to that purpose? Why?

#10: *Modern Japanese Bedroom*

As in other cultures, aesthetic ideals in Japan are not always carried out in everyday life. Even if most Japanese still subscribe to the traditional aesthetic ideals of stark simplicity and emptiness, crowded interiors and lack of space often make these ideals unrealistic. Since more than 3/4 of the Japanese people live in metropolitan areas with populations of 50,000, most people reside in small apartments, and do not usually have the luxury to be able to keep their rooms free of clutter. Often, the living room doubles at night as someone's bedroom and families generally cannot enjoy a great deal of empty space as this slide demonstrates.

Despite these exceptions, haiku and the other arts shown on the slides express important values of Japanese art, those of simplicity and suggestion.

How do you feel about these two aesthetic principles? Are they important in your culture too? If so, how and where do they appear? Can you give examples?

Follow-up

4. Simplicity and suggestion are not the only aesthetic ideals influential in Japanese historical or contemporary culture. These have been examined because they are two of the most significant and accessible ones and because they are important to haiku. Two others which have bearing on haiku and which should be touched upon here are *spontaneity* and *rhythm*.

a. *Spontaneity*—The creative tension between spontaneity and craftsmanship has always concerned Japanese artists. Haiku poets have sought to keep a sense of the natural, to capture the intensity of a natural feeling or moment of time in their work. To do so, however, is not simply a matter of jotting down striking impressions. It takes a certain amount of artistry to be able to convey one's initial feeling, yet if one applies that artistry too far, the immediacy of the impression or its natural quality will be destroyed.

We can examine this in the lotus blossom slides. One presents a natural setting and the other, an attempt to recreate it. You can imagine the problem for the flower arrangement artist—s/he wants to distill the essence of the natural setting and put it into his/her work, yet it is easy to see how over-stylization could destroy that aim.

Basho's haiku are famous for conveying images with an apparent simplicity and strength. However, behind that apparent simplicity lies a tremendous amount of thought and rewriting; he was famous for the amount of work and consideration he put into his writing. His poem about the frog, for example, seems straightforward and spontaneous enough, yet we know that Basho spent a long time perfecting it.

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b. *Rhythm* — The element of rhythm is familiar to Western poetry, and it is found in Japanese poetry as well as in other Japanese arts. Regularity or regular variation in rhythm gives a certain tone to a poem. It adds another meaning to the words of the poem, and gives the poet another way to express his ideas. For example, a break in rhythm can be used as a poetic device to show contrast or to effect a sudden change in thought or image.

The principle of rhythm is illustrated in many of the slides just shown, for example, in the lines of the tea room or of the rock garden. In the latter, we notice how the rock is placed at a break in the rows of sand. This becomes the focus of our attention, and the raked sand provides both a context for the rock and sets a mood or tone for the whole creation.

The value and meaning of specific aesthetic notions has differed in successive historical periods, and yet the principles we have focused on here have generally applied to haiku in Basho's time and in our own.

Lesson Three

HAIKU AND NATURE

Introduction

This audio-visual presentation consists of five haiku. Each poem is read first in Japanese and then in English, to the accompaniment of Japanese music and a slide which will help the class imagine visually what the poetry conveys through words. After the five poems have been read, several more minutes of slides and music are included to prompt students' memories and imaginations and suggest possible subjects for their own haiku.

Objectives

- to help students observe the centrality of the theme of nature in haiku
- to allow students to reflect on their own experiences with nature
- to encourage students to find inspiration in natural images for writing their own haiku

Materials

- slide set (slides #11-22)
- slide projector
- cassette tape (Side A)
- tape recorder

Teacher Preparation

1. We recommend that the teacher go through the slide show with the tape at least once before class. It is necessary to practice the timing, synchronizing slides with the narration, because there are no audible signals on the tape. There is a short break (5-10 sec.) between the end of one haiku pair (Japanese plus English translation) and the next. After the narration ends, the remaining slides should be shown for about one minute each.
2. Have students take out a pen and some paper to write down their ideas while viewing the slides.

Suggested Procedures

1. Introduce the slide/cassette show, telling students to keep the following things in mind as they view and listen:
   - As stressed in the previous discussion, listen for simplicity and suggestion in how each haiku "creates" a scene in your imagination.
   - Use your imagination to experience the poems and slides, allowing them to trigger images or memories in your mind that you can later write haiku about.

- Besides seeing and hearing, all the other senses can also be used in the process of writing haiku (examples: the feel of cool, green moss in your hand, or the cold wind on your face; the smell of a forest or the ocean; the taste of water from a stream).
- The last 7 slides will be shown without narration, to give students some possible ideas for writing haiku. If a slide gives students an idea, or reminds them of a previous experience, ask them to write it down immediately. Later, they may use it in writing a haiku.
- Some of the slides are of Japan, while others were taken in the United States. One doesn't have to be Japanese or use "typically Japanese" subjects to write haiku.

Slide Script

Note: The music heard on the tape is an example of minyo, Japanese folk music. The predominant instrument is the koto, a long stringed instrument played on the floor with a pick. It sounds slightly like a harp.

#11: *New Year poem*[1]

Kadokado no
Geta no doro yori
Harutachi nu[2]
—Issa (1763-1827)

At gate after gate
Mud on wooden clogs reveals
Spring has now arrived.

#12: *Spring poem*

Harusame ya
Monogatari yuku
Nino to kasa
—Buson (1715-1783)

Straw raincoat and hat
Walking together talking
In the soft spring rain.

#13: *Summer poem*

Asagao no
Hana de fuitaru
Iori kana
—Issa (1763-1827)

Morning glory vine
With its blossoms as cover
My dwelling is thatched.

#14: *Fall poem*

Hi wo keshite
Yo wo fuko-shi nu
Aki no koe
—Kijo (1870-1938)

Putting out the lamp I sat up late
through the night
Autumnal voices.

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#15: *Winter poem*

To wo akete
Odoroku yuki no
Ashita kana

Opening the door
Surprised to there discover
A morning of snow.

—Soseki (1865-1915)

Note: The following unaccompanied slides each show a seasonal scene, as listed.

#16 : WINTER

#17: WINTER

#18: SPRING

#19: SPRING

#20 : SUMMER

#21 : FALL

#22 : FALL (*omikuji*[3] tied on a fall branch)

Follow-up

1. After the slide show, discussion should focus on student reactions, and in particular on student ideas for haiku themes for their own writing.

2. If desired, go back to particular haiku or slides that affected students most strongly for further discussion.

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[1]According to the lunar calendar, the arrival of spring brings the new year.
[2]The underlined words are the *kigo* in each poem.
[3]*omikuji* (fortunes): Buying these paper fortunes at shrines is an old folk custom that is still done throughout Japan. The fortune is tied to the branch of one of the sacred trees on shrine grounds in order to insure that if it is a good fortune, it will come true, while if it's a bad one, it will be cancelled out.

Lesson Four

CREATIVE WRITING

Introduction

Creating the proper conditions and atmosphere for creative writing in the classroom is certainly one of the most delicate and challenging tasks for a teacher. Each teacher will have his or her own methods. Therefore, in this lesson, no set procedure is outlined. Instead, a few of the more obvious possibilities are suggested.

Suggested Procedures

1. Re-show a few of the slides and have the entire class write a haiku about each one. Ask several students to read their poems along with the appropriate slides.

2. Replay the last part of the tape (or other Japanese music) to help create mood during the writing period.

3. Bring in (or have students bring in) a number of natural objects to be passed around the class. Encourage students to focus on these objects using all their senses to develop a feeling for what the object is like as a way to find haiku themes.

Alternatively, you might want to take the class outside for a "haiku field trip" (see Lesson Six, *Optional Activities*). In either case, have the students share their haiku on each object. Undoubtedly, different approaches to expression will emerge which will hopefully furnish material for discussion.

Lesson Five

TRANSLATING HAIKU

Introduction

To more fully appreciate the art of haiku, students must also learn to appreciate the art of translating both words and style from one language to another. Students will be exposed to the challenges of translation in this lesson through their own experiences with translation.

Objectives

- to translate one haiku poem from Japanese to English
- to help students experience first-hand the difficulties of literary translation
- to show students how to preserve both the form and the flavor of the original poem in Japanese

Materials

- chalk and chalkboard

Teacher Preparation

1. Write the following haiku on the board:

   Hatsu arare
   Te ni tori mireba
   Moto no mizu

Suggested Procedures

1. Introduce the lesson by emphasizing the following points:
   - This lesson focuses on one vital part of haiku which was not emphasized in previous activities—the language itself.
   - Because Japanese lends itself more easily than any other language to writing haiku, with a structure different from those of the Romance languages, translators often experience difficulty making a good translation.
   - The two key concerns of the translator are: (1) to preserve the mood of the original; and (2) to produce a poem or text that sounds natural and pleasant to the ear in English. These two concerns are often in conflict.
   - A third issue that translators must deal with is: how important is it to preserve the form of the original? For example, if a poem rhymes in French, must the English translation also rhyme? In the case of haiku, must the English translation have exactly 17 syllables, in 5-7-5 verse?

2. Read the poem on the board aloud (use the Pronunciation Guide, Appendix C, if necessary). Tell the class that its task will be to translate it, starting from just the English equivalents of each separate word.

3. Rewrite the haiku with English equivalents:

Hatsu: first	*mireba:* when (I) look at/see
arare: sleet/hail (of winter)[1]	*moto:* beginning/origin
Te: hand	*no:* of
ni: in/by	*mizu:* water
tori: take/pick up	

4. Elicit student suggestions for translations of either the entire poem or of one of the lines. Encourage students to use as many of the individual words as they wish, and to add words where English sentence structure absolutely requires it.

5. This exercise is most successful if the students can come up with their own translation without a model. However, if the activity has become too frustrating, or if time is short, you may wish to write the following two translations on the board:

First hail of winter;
I look at it in my hand,
Becoming water.

First sleet of winter;
Take it in my hands to see
Water becoming.

Ask students which one (if either) they prefer and why. If they had trouble coming up with their own translations before, this may inspire them to try again.

Note that both of these translations have a 5-7-5 syllabic structure. Your students may have trouble keeping this structure. In that case, you might at least encourage them to keep a short—long—short line length to preserve the flavor of the original.

Related Activities

See Lesson Six, Optional Activities, under "Translation"

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[1]*Hatsu arare* is the *kigo* in this poem. It literally means the first hail or sleet. However, it specifically refers to the first hail of winter. Therefore, although the word "winter" is not actually written, it is implied and is best translated into the poem in English.

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Lesson Six

Optional Activities

Multimedia

Have students take photographs or draw pictures to illustrate either their own haiku or others studied in class.

As a group or class project, assemble an entire haiku slide show of students' poems, with musical accompaniment and slides or drawings.

Writing

A class field trip to a Japanese garden or a park can provide an environment conducive to writing or understanding haiku. Encourage students to concentrate on one or two subjects for an extended period of time and to use all their senses in getting to know the object. If a field trip is not possible, have the class go outside to write or to pick up ideas for haiku themes.

Assign reports on Japanese haiku masters and their lives. A possible term project would be to write a paper about, or to illustrate, the life of the poet Matsuo Basho, as he wrote it down in his famous travelogue translated into English as *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches* (Penguin Books.)

Assign reports on British and American poets who have been influenced by haiku. Two of the best known are Ezra Pound and Amy Lowell. J.D. Salinger was also interested in haiku.

Translation

Students can explore the issue of translation further. They might want to write a paper concerning the possible ways to translate the poem in Lesson Five. They could also discuss the conflict between preserving the essence of the original poem and producing a natural-sounding English translation based on their translation experience. If they want to work on other poems, refer them to the *Additional Haiku* list (Appendix A). (Further translation work with those poems would be most valuable if there is a Japanese speaker available to help.)

Reading

Handout 6A gives some background information about haiku, two Japanese haiku poets, and one Western haiku poet. Handout 6B includes a review of haiku guidelines. You may wish to assign this reading as homework or as a class discussion. Have students consider the following questions:

- What did Basho think was the most important thing for an artist? Do you think he "practiced what he preached" using the haiku given here as evidence? What about Issa and Lowell?

- Why do you think three people translated the same Japanese poem by Basho so differently? What was each translator trying to communicate through his choice of words and word order? Which translation do you think is best? Why?

- What are the themes of the poems by Issa? How does he use suggestion to hint at what he wants us to feel?

- In the Amy Lowell poem, she tells us it is spring, but also that she stayed in her room only to *think* of spring leaves. What does this tell us about her? What else does the last line suggest about her life in general? Why do you think she chose haiku to express herself?

- In what ways do the haiku in the handout show the Japanese aesthetic values that we discussed earlier? Give one specific example for each value.

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HAIKU POETRY AND POETS

A Note About Haiku

Haiku is only one of several kinds of Japanese poetry, but it is the best known form in the West. It originated over 700 years ago, although it did not become popular in its own right until the 17th and 18th centuries. It developed from another form of poetry called *haikai*, which was composed of a long series of verses of alternating length. When certain opening verses from the haikai tradition came to be independently famous, the haiku tradition developed.

By reading the short biographic sketches of Basho and Issa, two famous *haijin* (haiku poets), perhaps it will be easier to understand how they got their inspiration for the following classical haiku.

Basho (1644-1694)

Basho was one of the first important haiku poets. In fact, it is often said that he made haiku a popular form of poetry. Basho studied haiku while young and at the age of 28 moved to Edo (the old name for Tokyo), where he composed mostly humorous poems at first. As he got older, Basho gradually devoted his life to religious contemplation (meditation) and began to write more serious haiku. During this time, he often left his hut to travel all over Japan, recording his observations and feelings in poetic diaries. It is said that this period of solitary journeys produced his best poetry and prose. Perhaps it was on some uncharted mountain path that he wrote the following:

> ....all who have achieved real excellence
> in any art possess one thing in common;
> that is, a mind to obey nature, to be one
> with nature, throughout the four seasons
> of the year...

Here is one of Basho's most famous haiku, translated three different ways by three American poets:

> Furuike ya
> Kawazu tobikomu
> Mizu no oto

The old pond;
A frog jumps in—
The sound of water

Old pond, blackly still—
Frog, plunging into water,
splinters silent air.

Ah, this ancient pond!
Into it there jumps a frog.
The splash of water.

Issa (1762-1826)

The second haiku master was Issa, whose real name was Yataro Kobayashi. Issa was born in a village in central Japan, but like Basho, left

home for Edo at a young age. Tragedy seemed to follow Issa throughout his life. Since his mother died when he was young, he was raised by a very strict, unloving stepmother. His first four children and wife all died before him, and he himself did not live to see the birth of his only child who lived to maturity, a daughter born to his third wife. Perhaps this is why the great poet's haiku seem to have a beautiful, yet sad, lonely quality about them, and why Issa often wrote about small, helpless animals such as sparrows, frogs, and insects. Above all, the *haijin* Issa reflected a great love for the simple things in life. It is said that Issa wrote the following well-loved poem when he was only 6 years old:

Come and let us play—
You, a small, orphaned sparrow,
and I, another.

More by Issa:

In its eye
the far-off hills are mirrored—
dragonfly!

Under cherry blossoms,
None are
really strangers

A lovely thing to see:
through the paper window's holes
the Milky Way

Western Haiku Poets

In the late 1800's, Western poetry began to feel the influence of haiku. For example, read the following poem by Amy Lowell (1925):

Staying in my room,
I thought of the new spring leaves.
That day was happy.

Many American poets since Amy Lowell have written haiku, however, as Harold G. Henderson points out in his book *Haiku in English*, English language haiku is still in its "infancy." Haiku are being written by English speakers in great profusion and Henderson points out that there are now publications devoted solely to haiku as well as collections of poems by individual poets. However, the quality of these poems is highly divergent, as there is as yet "..no generally accepted criteria for what haiku in English are, or should be." (p. 28) Henderson enumerates four basic rules of Japanese haiku (p. 14):

1. consists of 17 Japanese syllables (5-7-5)

2. contains at least some reference to nature (other than human nature)

3. refers to a particular event (i.e., it is not a generalization)

4. presents that event as happening <u>now</u>— not in the past.

There is little unanimity among American poets as to which of these must also be considered "rules" for English haiku. Unfortunately, most American poets seem to be unfamiliar with the techniques, or devices, such as *kigo*, of the Japanese haiku poets. Issues such as whether or not the 5-7-5 syllabic form should be preserved or whether or not kigo should be used (for those poets who have heard of kigo at all) or whether or not rhyme can be effectively employed in English-language haiku are still being debated. Most Americans, however, try to deal with nature and to convey, simply, the emotions aroused by a particular event.

For those who want to try writing haiku, Henderson has excellent advice. He suggests that to begin with, one should work to master the "pictorial" haiku. This involves a simple description of an experience or setting which has particular emotional meaning for the poet. The emotions that the experience arouses are to be conveyed through this straightforward description. This kind of haiku, he says, "..teaches observation, the recognition of what is (or is not) important in any experience, at least the beginnings of the art of compression, and, above all, that a haiku is a record of some particular moment of experience or intuition." (p. 60) Eventually, one might try to include more subjective observations that involve the non-visual senses. Henderson gives many helpful suggestions, and the aspiring poet would do well to read his book in both working on his/her own writing and in working towards a better understanding and definition of what English-language haiku should constitute.

handout 6b

REVIEW OF HAIKU GUIDELINES

Structure

(1) three lines

(2) 17 syllables, 5-7-5 arrangement

(3) does not have to rhyme or form a complete sentence; haiku usually do not rhyme in Japanese.

(4) are concerned with nature, particularly the changing seasons for which there are "season words" *kigo* (for example, flower viewing and melting snow signify spring in Japanese haiku)

(5) are usually spontaneous observations of nature, although some are more reflective and personal

Content

(1) some images are very simple, direct expressions of something felt through one or more of the five senses, while others can be read at more than one level, and have deeper meanings

(2) based on human experience of the natural world

(3) show a great appreciation of nature and often include spiritual thoughts regarding one's environment; haiku has been greatly influenced by Buddhism

(4) along with spontaneous observations of the natural world, two key stylistic principles are simplicity and suggestion (hinting at what one wants to say); note that these principles are shared by other arts

(5) sometimes have a funny or unexpected twist at the end; for example:

Little frog among
rain-shaken leaves, are you, too,
splashed with fresh green paint?

—Gaki

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APPENDICES

appendix a

ADDITIONAL HAIKU[1] (SIDE B OF CASSETTE TAPE)

1. *shizukasaya*
(stillness/ya[2])
iwa ni shimi-iru
(rock(s)/into/penetrate-pierce)
semi no koe
(cicada-locust/possessive particle/voice[s])

Locust cries
Deeply penetrate the rocks
Silence prevails.

—Basho (1644-1694)

2. *hebi nigete*
(snake/fleeing)
ware wo mishi me no
(me-I/object marker/(which) looked/eyes/ possessive particle)
kusa ni nokoru
(grass/in/remains)

The snake flees
But eyes that watched me
Remain in the grass.

—Kyoshi (1874-1959)

3. *tsurigane ni*
(temple bell/on)
tomarite nemuru
(stopped [and was]/sleeping)
kocho kana
(small butterfly/*kana*)

On a temple bell
Resting, asleep
A tiny butterfly

—Buson (1715-1783)

4. *kiraretaru*
(having been stabbed-cut up)
yume wa makoto ka
(dream/topic marker/real-true/question marker)
nomi no ato
flea/possessive particle/trace(s)-mark(s)

Stabbed to death!
Was my dream true!
The marks of a flea.[3]

—Kikaku (1660-1707)

5. *shira-kumo no*
(white clouds/possessive particle)
ue ni koe aru
(above/in-at/voice[s]/are-have-exist)
hibari kana
(skylark(s)/kana)

White clouds
Above are voices—
The skylark.

—Kyoroku (1655-1715)

6. *tokete yuku*
(melting away)
mono mina aoshi
(things/all/green)
haru no yuki
(spring/possessive particle/snow)

Spring snow—
As it melts away,
All things turn green.

—Kikusha-Ni (1752-1826)

7. *kojiki kana*
(beggar/*kana*)
tenchi wo kitaru
(heaven and earth/object marker/[which are] worn)
natsugoromo
(summer clothes)

There a beggar goes!
Heaven and Earth he's wearing
For his summer clothes!

—Kikaku (1660-1707)

8. *yagate shinu*
(at length/to die)
keshiki wa miezu
(appearance-form/topic marker/is not seen)
semi no koe
(cicada-locust/possessive particle/voice[s])

Very soon they die—
But of that there is no sign
In the locust-cry

—Basho (1644-1694)

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[1]Note that most of these poems do not preserve the original 5-7-5 syllable structure in translation, but these translations have been made trying to mimic the meaning and feeling of the original Japanese poems as closely as possible. We are indebted to Professor Makoto Ueda and his book, *Modern Japanese Haiku, An Anthology*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976, for this method of explaining/translating the Japanese poems.

[2]*ya* and *kana* have no direct English equivalents. Professor Ueda explains them in his book: "[*ya*] Emphasizes the preceding word or words. In haiku it is often used as the so-called 'cutting-word,' dividing the poem into two parts and inviting the reader to discover their interrelationship by himself. It is somewhat like a colon in English punctuation, since there is usually an implied emotion without specifying it. Thus a poet who dislikes particularizing his emotion often chooses toend his poem with *kana*, leaving out his main verb" (1976:265).

[3]Poems 4, 7, and 8 were translated by Donald Keene in his *Anthology of Japanese Literature* , New York: Grove Press, 1955: 379, 385, 384. Unless otherwise indicated, all other poems in this unit were translated by Teaching Japan in the Schools Project Associates Kate Saltzman and Bob Huey. One exception to this are the Issa poems (Handout 6A), which were translated by R.H. Blyth and Nobuyuki Yuasa.

appendix b

Background Information for Teachers

History

The first 17 syllable haiku date from the early 13th century. However, haiku as we know them today did not become widely known until the 17th century, largely through the verse of Matsuo Basho, often considered the first haiku master. His example has inspired subsequent poets, Japanese and foreign alike, by challenging them to "get into the deepest possible contact with the greatest number of things" (R.H. Blyth.) Indeed, it is this ability to touch the very center of human emotions and life itself which characterizes good haiku.

Seasonal Focus

One technique for "seeing the world in a grain of sand" (William Blake) is the use of *kigo* (key seasonal words,) references to the time of year or seasons in which the poem was written. Early haiku poets decided that since the change of seasons is one experience common to all people, their poetry would be best understood if it incorporated seasonal movements in each poem; thus the use of *kigo*. Such seasonal words may either be a direct naming of the season, like "winter sky" or "summer ocean," or they may only be an allusion to a season. For example, to many Japanese, flower-viewing and the word "blossom" indicate spring, while to many Americans rustling leaves or pumpkins signify autumn.

Form

The haiku form itself is rather paradoxical. It is at the same time simple and profound, compact yet all-encompassing, minutely rich in description, and yet highly suggestive. By focusing on the "hidden glimmerings" of nature as experienced by humankind, it acts as a telescope for both the human heart and the natural world.

Although the most important quality of haiku is its reflection of human emotions via natural phenomena, its approximate 5-7-5 format has also become an unwritten rule among poets. Unlike much of our poetry, haiku does not depend on rhyme or on a specified rhythm to give it structure; rather, the 5-7-5 arrangement lends sufficient order and "rhythm" to the poem. With only 17 syllables with which to work, the poet must choose words carefully, giving just enough but not too much detail. It is said that good haiku resembles a Japanese brush-drawing; one must fill in the missing strokes with one's own imagination.

Simplicity and Suggestion

Finally, when reading and writing haiku it is important to keep in mind the stylistic principles of simplicity and suggestion, as well as the spontaneous interpretation of one's environment. The 5-7-5 format is merely a vehicle for expressing these qualities and by extension, the poet's inner feelings. In order to best understand this, the teacher along with students is encouraged to attempt writing haiku, also bearing in mind the words of Basho:

> . . . all who have achieved real excellence in any art possess one thing in common; that is, a mind to obey nature, to be one with nature, throughout the four seasons of the year.

—from *The Way of Silence: The Prose and Poetry of Basho* by Richard Lewis

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

(1) The five Japanese vowels are pronounced as follows:

- "a" as in father
- "i" as in pizza
- "u" as in true
- "e" as in pet
- "o" as in port

(2) With the exception of a final "n" sound, all sounds in Japanese are composed of an initial consonant followed by a vowel or are simply composed of a vowel alone. Most consonants are pronounced the same as in English, with the exception of the following combinations:

- "si" is pronounced "shi," and usually, you will find it spelled as "shi."
- "ti" does not exist. In its place is "chi."
- "tu" does not exist. In its place is "tsu."
- "hu" is pronounced "who" and is usually spelled "fu."
- "r" is pronounced with a combination of "r," "l" and "d" sounds. Listen carefully to the tape and practice until you have perfected the Japanese "r."

(3) The 46 Japanese syllables are[1]:

a	ka	sa	ta	na	ha	ma	ya	ra	wa	n
i	ki	shi	chi	ni	hi	mi		ri		
u	ku	su	tsu	nu	hu (fu)	mu	yu	ru		
e	ke	se	te	ne	he	me		re		
o	ko	so	to	no	ho	mo	yo	ro	(w)o	

(4) In addition the following syllables are also used:

ga	za	da	pa/ba
gi	ji	(ji)	pi/bi
gu	zu	(zu)	pu/bu
ge	ze	de	pe/be
go	zo	do	po/bo

(5) Vowels with a line above them are given a longer pronunciation. For example, "o" is pronounced "oo."

(6) "Ya," "yu" and "yo" can be combined with all of the syllables that are formed of a consonant and "i." In that case, the "i"component is dropped. For example, "ki" and "yu" together are pronounced "kyu."

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[1]These 46 syllables are read on Side B of the cassette tape.

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Yuasa, Noboyuki (Trans.). *Issa: The Year of My Life.* Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972.

Students and teachers alike may enjoy one of the following English translations of Basho's most famous travel diary:

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appendix d

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[1]*Hokku* developed into the *haikai* form and later the *haiku* form of Japanese poetry.

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